



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

Mr. Darwin, at the close of his work, makes a summary of the advantages and discomforts of a five years' voyage, in which, though he is no enthusiast, he gives the preponderance to the former. Of the ocean he speaks with a coolness to which that element is but little used ; saying, that, after all its boasted glories, it is but a tedious waste, a desert of water. He speaks with some respect of a clear moonlight night upon the sea ; but as for the storm, with all its boasted sublimity, he thinks that it bears no comparison with the same agitation of the winds on shore. The scenery which he saw on his voyage was more varied and stupendous than Europe could have afforded him ; but after all his tastes as an observer of nature are satisfied, he seems to be most interested in the sight of man, in those earlier stages of barbarism through which our own ancestors must have passed. Doubtless, to some future age our own civilization will appear like a variety of barbarism, or at least like a transition state ; but meantime it is matter of study and reflection to observe those peculiarities out of which, or of something like which, our present social systems have sprung.

ART. VIII. — *The Poets and Poetry of Europe, with Introductions and Biographical Notices.* By HENRY W. LONGFELLOW. Philadelphia : Carey & Hart. 1845. 8vo. pp. 779.

To the student of poetry, who is not acquainted with the languages of continental Europe, this large and handsome volume will bring a great store of amusement and instruction. Within a moderate compass, it gives him the means of gaining a connected view, and one as complete and perfect as can be obtained without a knowledge of the original tongues, of the poetical literature which exists in ten languages. Six of these, the Anglo-Saxon, Icelandic, Danish, Swedish, German, and Dutch, belong to the great Gothic family of the North ; while the remaining four, the French, Italian, Spanish, and Portuguese, are daughters of the Latin. We find here some of the editor's own beautiful translations, most of which, however, had previously ap-

peared in print, from eight of these languages ; and in this great crowd of translations by different hands, certainly very few appear equal to Professor Longfellow's in point of fidelity, elegance, and finish. The work is an honorable memorial of his great attainments as a linguist, in which character, rather than as a poet, his fame will be sustained and advanced by this publication.

The plan of the work, so far as we know, is wholly original and peculiar. The editor's intention was to give as perfect an idea of the poetical literature of modern Europe, as could be gained from the rhythmical translations that have been made at divers times by English poets and linguists. The bulk of the volume, therefore, is composed of excerpts from the publications of Bowring, Herbert, Costello, Taylor, Jamieson, Brooks, Adamson, Thorpe, and a crowd of other versifiers, who have clothed foreign poetry in an English garb. As might be expected from its comprehensive character, "the work is to be regarded as a collection, rather than as a selection," many pieces being admitted without reference to their poetical merit, but as the only versions into English which could be found to illustrate the poetry of a particular nation or age. Viewed merely as translations, some are very literal, others are loose and paraphrastic ; many have been worked over into smooth and sounding English verse, while others are mere rough copies, that preserve the sentiment and imagery, but sacrifice entirely the metrical characteristics, of the originals. The former resemble foreign coins that have been melted down and stamped anew in the English mint ; the latter have merely had the foreign mark effaced, and are here presented only as bullion, or rude material, which may afterwards receive a new form and impression, and circulate again as currency.

The arrangement of these borrowed materials is the distinctive feature of this publication. The translations from each language are brought together, and arranged according to the dates, or with reference to the age of the poets from whom they are taken. The object is not merely to illustrate the literature of another country at a particular time, or during its Augustan age ; but to present at least a few specimens from every period in its annals, and thus to give a general idea of the history of poetry in each nation. An

introductory sketch is given of the peculiarities of the language, and of the several epochs into which the literary history of the country is divided. These sketches were meant to be brief, but comprehensive; we cannot speak particularly of their merits, because several of them are taken from articles which appeared for the first time in this Journal. These are followed by the selected translations from the poets, beginning with the most ancient in each land, and coming down to those who are our contemporaries, save when, as in the case of the Anglo-Saxon, the history alike of the language and the literature was long since closed. The extracts are preceded by biographical or critical notices of the poets, quite brief for the most part, but sometimes giving occasion for very agreeable excursions into the domains of biography and literary disquisition. Most of these are written by Professor Felton, to whose taste and learning the merit of a large portion of what is most original and agreeable in this volume is entirely to be ascribed. His prefatory notices form a kind of dictionary of the poets of modern Europe; and though, in many cases, the information given is quite scanty, those only who have had some experience in this kind of work can judge of the amount of labor and research which he has expended upon the undertaking.

Thus far we have considered the book as prepared for that class of English readers who can acquire a knowledge of the poetry of other countries only through the medium of translations. To the scholar who is well versed in the languages of continental Europe, the volume will appear curious and valuable when considered as a collection of specimens to show the comparative degree of skill and taste of many translators of foreign poetry into English verse. The task of such versifiers seems an humble one, when compared with the high vocation of the true "maker," or poet. The translator is a literary slave; the humblest or the boldest attempt at originality of thought or expression on his part must be viewed as an imperfection or a crime. He is bound to follow his master with servile fidelity, to copy defects, as well as merits, with a kind of Chinese accuracy. He is a dealer in nothing but words, an artist only in style and metrical arrangement; he has no right to any ideas of his own, and it is high-treason in him to alter or modify those of another, though it be only to mend them.

Imitation, indeed, is the province of art in general ; but it is imitation of a free and daring kind, which superadds grace, beauty, and dignity to the original, which exalts the humble, restores the depraved, illumines the obscure, and animates the dead. This is the work of the sculptor, the painter, the musician, and the poet. The translator labors in a far humbler walk, as he aims at imitation only in the strictest sense of the term. His office, indeed, is rather to transfer, than to imitate ; like the merchant, he imports goods from beyond sea, allowing them to suffer as little change or loss as is possible during the passage.

This, at any rate, is the theory of translation now most in vogue among the critics. With them, verbal accuracy is the great point ; like charity, it is held to cover a multitude of sins. A poetical translation may be harsh, obscure, unmusical, ill-adapted to an English taste, still deformed by idiomatic peculiarities of the language whence it was drawn ; but if it be literal, if it render not only line for line, but word for word, it is held up as the only faithful translation, the only copy that gives one a true idea of the original. We do not accept this canon of criticism, as we hold a far higher idea of the dignity and importance of the translator's office. We prefer Pope's Homer to Cowper's, and though scholars will scoff at such an avowal, the whole multitude of unlearned readers probably will agree with us in opinion. A mere child is fascinated with the former, to which some of the most remarkable men who have lived during the last hundred years — poets, statesmen, and philosophers — have been indebted for the first decided impulse which their minds received, for the earliest awakening and direction of their genius. No one but a Greek scholar ever read Cowper's version through, and he not without much labor and weariness of spirit. At most, he is glad to throw it aside, and recur once more to the sounding hexameters of the glorious original ; the lagging and heavy translation had pleased him not for its own sake, but because it called more vividly to mind the well-remembered Greek. The first object of the poet, whether trading upon his own stock, or upon borrowed capital, is to impart pleasure ; he does not aim primarily to instruct or convince ; it is no part of his business to teach another language, or to daguerrotype some work of art in another clime so faithfully that the copy will

bear examination under the microscope. As a translator, it seems to us, his first purpose is to produce a beautiful English poem ; his second to preserve the lineaments of the original so far as the difference between the two languages and the attainment of the former and higher object will admit.

Of course, verbal accuracy is an excellence, when it is compatible with these ends ; but to exalt it over all the other qualities of a translation is to make the business of the translator a mere contest of difficulties with words and idioms. His success in a trial of this sort, like the feats of a juggler or a rope-dancer, we may view with curiosity or astonishment, but with no real pleasure or lasting gratification ; the thing done has no intrinsic value or beauty, but we wonder that he should be able to do it at all. An eminent German critic, more remarkable for learning and arrogance, than for taste or sound judgment, once undertook to translate the *Odyssey* into German hexameters, rendering line for line, and cæsure for cæsure, so that the version should be an exact transcript of the original. He began the task, but had not gone over a tenth part of the first book before he stopped short in the middle of a line, and declared that there was not a man in all Europe who was able to finish it. We hope no one was silly enough to make the attempt. This fragment of a version we have never seen ; but we think it must be a queer specimen of crabbed diction and halting versification, fit to be locked up in a cabinet of curiosities with a copy of the *Odyssey* written out in so fine a hand as to be all contained on a single sheet of paper ; no person who had any regard for his eyes or his patience would undertake to read either the manuscript or the translation.

The German critic, Menzel, makes some pungent remarks upon the very literal translations of J. H. Voss from the Greek, which are so apposite, and so fully sustain our views, that we place them before our readers. We quote from Professor Felton's translation, which is cited on the 301st page of this volume.

“ For more than half a century, he undertook the Sisyphean toil of rolling the rough runestone of the German language up the Grecian Parnassus ; but

‘ Back again down to the plain rebounded the ragged rock swiftly.’

“ He had the fixed idea, that the German language must be fitted to the Greek in mechanical fashion, syllable for syllable.

He confounded his peculiar talent for these philological trifles, and the predilection which flowed out of it, with a universal capacity and with a universal want of the German language and poetry, as if a rope-dancer were to insist upon every body's dancing on the rope. The most obvious means of trailing the German language over the espalier of the Greek was naturally translations. Here the German language was brought so near the Greek, that it was forced to follow all its movements, like a wild elephant harnessed to a tame one. Voss is celebrated as the most faithful translator, but only so far as regards the materials of language and its mechanical laws; spirit and soul have always vanished under his clumsy fingers. In his translations he has banished the peculiar character and the natural grace of the German language, and put a strait jacket upon the lovely captive, which allowed her to move only in a stiff, unnatural, and constrained manner. His great merit consists in having introduced into the language of literature a great number of good, but antiquated, words, or those used only among the common people. He was forced to this, because it was necessary that he should have a wide range of words to choose from, in order to fill out always the prescribed Greek measure with the greatest exactness. He has, moreover, like Klopstock, developed the powers of the German language, by these difficult Greek exercises; just as the money-diggers, though they found no money, yet made the soil more fertile. I am very far from denying him this merit with regard to the language, — a service as laborious as it was useful; but his studies cannot pass for masterpieces; they were only the apparatus, the scaffolding, the school, and not the work of art itself. They were distortions of the language, in order to show how far its capability extended, but did not exhibit the grace of its proper movement. No one could talk as Voss wrote. Every body would have thought it vexatious and ridiculous, who had been required to arrange his words like Voss. They never sound like any thing but a stiff translation, even when he does not in fact translate. These translations, however, are often so slavishly close, and, therefore, not German, that they are unintelligible, until we read the original. And yet that fidelity could not express the spirit and the peculiar character of the foreign author, together with the sound of the words. On the contrary, the painful stiffness of constraint is the universal badge of all his translations; and in this they are all alike; this was the last upon which he stretched them all. Whether Voss translates Hesiod, Homer, Theocritus, Virgil, Ovid, Horace, Shakspeare, or an old Minnesong, everywhere we hear only the goat-footed steed of his

prose trotting along ; and even the mighty genius of Shakspeare cannot force him out of his own beat for a moment." — pp. 301, 302.

When a work of art is to be copied, fidelity to the original includes something more than an exact version of the words. Its spirit, harmony, and grace, its ease and finish, are to be transferred or imitated, or the copy will resemble nothing more than an exquisite piece of tapestry when viewed on the wrong side, every thread appearing in its due place, while the artistic effect of the whole has entirely disappeared. "Poetry is of so subtile a spirit," says Sir John Denham, "that in pouring out of one language into another, it will all evaporate ; and if a new spirit be not added in the transfusion, there will remain nothing but a *caput mortuum*." The mere verbal copyist strains out a gnat, but swallows a camel ; he is a slave to the letter, while he violates the spirit ; he preserves the meaning, while he destroys the poetry. Walter Scott, in summing up the merits of Dryden, assumes it as one of his highest excellencies, that he had assisted "to free translation from the fetters of verbal metaphrase, and to teach posterity the powerful and varied poetical harmony of which their language was capable." Glorious John is the most copious, and, on the whole, most successful, poetical translator that English literature can boast of ; and he showed, both by precept and example, his careful observance of the precept given by Horace : —

"Nec verbum verbo curabis reddere, fidus
Interpres."

The true law of poetical translation we hold to be this : to produce such a work on the given topic, and with the given materials of thought, as the author probably would have written, if he had been of the same country, and had spoken the same language, as the translator. The problem will then be solved, as far as the infirmity of our nature or the smallness of our means will permit, — to enable those who are readers only of the vernacular to derive as much pleasure from the poem as the scholar does who is well acquainted with the language in which it was first written. The scholar, indeed, will always have an additional enjoyment peculiar to himself, founded on the power of comparing the copy with the original. But this is only a second-

any pleasure, though the translator who piques himself on verbal fidelity produces this effect and nothing else ; the characteristic excellence of his work can be appreciated only by one who understands the original, and who, therefore, has no need of any translation. The word or phrase which may give him pleasure, as a happy rendering of a difficult passage, may only offend the reader who is trying the poem by a taste formed exclusively upon English models. That this law of translation, which appears so obvious and reasonable, should be so frequently disregarded or violated, must be ascribed to the evil habits formed by the petty carplings of small critics, who follow a spirited translation of a noble poem with the original in one hand and a dictionary in the other, ready to pounce on every happy alteration of an epithet as a crime. Neither thought, taste, nor feeling is necessary for such criticism. The most that they gain by it is to display their own knowledge of the language, and to exult in a moment's fancied superiority over the translator.

Mr. Longfellow's theory of translation does not coincide with our own. He belongs to the strictest sect, even to the Pharisees ; and if others were as fortunate as he is in reconciling the severity of their principles with ease, grace, and idiomatic finish, we might be tempted to reconsider our position. In this bulky volume, however, filled with translations of every degree of fidelity and poetical merit, we find an abundance of examples wherewith to confirm our doctrine, and even to convict the editor of some inconsistency in the application of his principles. In every case in which he had any choice, he ought to have preferred the more faithful translation ; but his good taste has often triumphed over his theory, and compelled him to put aside the literal, but spiritless version, and make room for the elegant or daring paraphrase. Mr. Eliot's translation of "The Song of the Bell" is one of the most flowing and tasteful, but certainly not the most literal, of the numerous versions of that poem. We find, also, copious extracts from Lockhart's very beautiful Spanish Ballads, which are so paraphrastic that they can hardly be called translations. More faithful transcripts of these poems were at hand, if the editor had seen fit to adopt them. We do not complain of these violations of his principles, but rejoice over them. We rather complain of the opposite class of cases, in which he seems to us to have followed his the-

ory, in spite of his taste and better judgment. Thus, he has given W. Taylor's vapid rendering of Bürger's wild ballad, "Lenore," instead of the fine and bold imitation of it by Walter Scott.

The quantity of material given to illustrate any one period in a nation's literary history is not always proportioned to the richness or excellence of the native mine whence it was drawn. Not professing to give new translations, except in a very few cases, the work is made up of the labors of others, and in its comprehensive survey necessarily passes over some tracts, where they have done but little, and where, consequently, but little could be gleaned. Translators have worked in squads, as it were, expending great labor on certain poets and particular epochs, and passing over others very lightly. The earlier and more eminent Italian poets have been done into English by a great number of hands, and with every degree of excellence. So it has been with the later poets of Germany, of whose works translations have been multiplied even to wearisomeness ; thus proving that the number of students of the German language is now so much increased, as greatly to diminish the demand for more versions into English. On the other hand, from what we are apt to regard as the Augustan age of French literature, from the middle of the seventeenth to the middle of the eighteenth century, judging from the extracts in this volume, there are very few English metrical translations. He who desires to know the poets and dramatists of the age of Louis the Fourteenth, who would become acquainted with Corneille, Boileau, Racine, Molière, and Voltaire, must study them in the original. Of the satires of Boileau, however, he will find some very elegant and spirited imitations in the earlier volumes of this Journal. One of these has been adopted by Mr. Longfellow, and this, with a scene from "The Cid," translated by Colley Cibber, one from "Andromaque," imitated by Ambrose Philips, a brief, anonymous translation from "The Misanthrope," and two short extracts from Aaron Hill's version of "Alzire," is all that one finds to illustrate this remarkable group of satirists and dramatists.

But it is time to take a brief view of the contents of this volume, in the order in which they are presented. First come the translated specimens of Anglo-Saxon poetry, consisting of extracts from the old epic poem of "Beowulf,"

the monk Cædmon's paraphrase of portions of Holy Writ, King Alfred's version of the metres of Boethius, and a few historic odes and miscellaneous pieces. Most of the translations are by Taylor, Thorpe, Ingram, Kemble, and Longfellow. The specimens are mostly unrhymed, and more literal than rhythmical, so that they must be read rather as curious illustrations of the age and nation to which they belong, than with any expectation of poetical merit. The short, broken lines and abrupt diction are well suited to the rude simplicity of the narrative and descriptive passages, and to the wild and forcibly depicted imagery. The extracts bear about the same resemblance to poetry, that the clink of hammers in a blacksmith's shop does to music. Our great ancestors, after all, were a rough and barbarous set, and the cause of civilization had little to expect from their descendants, till the breed was crossed by the more refined and chivalrous Normans. We have room to copy but a small portion of the old monk's account of the destruction of Pharaoh.

"The folk was affrighted,	Where ways ere lay,
The flood-dread seized on	Sea ragèd.
Their sad souls ;	Their might was merged,
Ocean wailed with death,	The stream stood,
The mountain heights were	The storm rose
With blood besteamèd,	High to heaven ;
The sea foamed gore,	The loudest army-cry
Crying was in the waves,	The hostile uttered ;
The water full of weapons,	The air above was thickened
A death-mist rose ;	With dying voices ;
The Egyptians were	Blood pervaded the flood,
Turned back ;	The shield-walls were riven,
Trembling they fled,	Shook the firmament
They felt fear :	That greatest of sea-deaths :
Would that host gladly	The proud died,
Find their homes ;	Kings in a body ;
Their vaunt grew sadder :	The return prevailed
Against them, as a cloud, rose	Of the sea at length ;
The fell rolling of the waves ;	Their bucklers shone
There came not any	High over the soldiers ;
Of that host to home,	The sea-wall rose,
But from behind inclosed them	The proud ocean-stream,
Fate with the wave.	Their might in death was

Fastly fettered.	The ever cold sea,
The tide's neap,	With its ever salt waves,
With the war-enginery ob-	Its eternal stations,
structed,	A naked, involuntary mes-
Laid bare the sand	senger,
To the fated host,	Came to visit." — p. 18.
When the wandering stream,	

Icelandic poetry has the same general characteristics as the Anglo-Saxon, being equally abrupt, obscure, and bold, though it has a wider compass, and displays more imaginative power. The Skalds or minstrels were numerous, forming a distinct profession, and their songs cheered the long winter evenings for the people, and added to the entertainment on great festive occasions. Two causes operated chiefly to nourish the taste for song, and to determine its character; the wild and striking mythology which constituted the Icelandic religion, and the impressive forms of external nature in that volcanic island of the Northern sea. That huge and restless Hecla, continually throwing flame through ice, and imparting a ruddy tinge to the night sky and to the vast plains of surrounding snow, was enough in itself to nourish a superstitious and fanciful spirit among the people. Familiar objects seemed wildly transformed and spectral, when viewed by that strange glare. The rude natives were awed by such fierce contrasts and marvellous sights; and the popular stories current among all barbarous races received in their case a deeper tone of solemnity, and took more powerful hold of the feelings. Carlyle happily describes in a few words the ruling trait of their religious faith. "The primary characteristic of this old Northland mythology I find to be impersonation of the visible workings of Nature, — earnest, simple recognition of the workings of Physical Nature, as a thing wholly miraculous, stupendous, and divine. What we now lecture of, as Science, they wondered at, and fell down in awe before, as Religion."

Herbert and W. Taylor have furnished most of the translations of Icelandic poetry that are included in this volume. Those executed by the former have some artistic finish, and are more attractive than the bald versions of the latter. We quote a few stanzas of a gentler strain, from Herbert's translation of "The Dying Song of Asbiörn."

“ Know, gentle mother, know,
Thou wilt not comb my flowing hair,
When summer sweets return
In Denmark's valleys, Svanhvide fair !
O, whilom had I fondly vowed
To hie me to my native land !
Now must my panting side be torn
By my keen foe's relentless brand !

“ Not such those days of yore,
When blithe we quaffed the foaming ale ;
Or urged across the waves
From Hordaland the flying sail ;
Or gladly drank the sparkling mead,
While social mirth beguiled the hour.
Now, lonely in the narrow den,
I mourn the giant's savage power.

“ Not such those days of yore,
When forth we went in warlike show :
Storolf's all-glorious son
Stood foremost on the armed prow,
As, sailing fast to Oresound,
The long-keeled vessels cleft the wave.
Now, tolled into the fatal snare,
I mourn beneath the sorcerer's cave.

“ Not such those days of yore,
When conquest marked proud Ormur's way,
Stirring the storm of war,
To glut the greedy beasts of prey :
Beneath his thundering falchion's stroke
Flowed the deep waters red with gore,
And many a gallant warrior fell
To feed the wolves on Ifa's shore.

“ Not such those days of yore,
When, south on Elfa's rocky coast,
Warring with weapons keen,
I fiercely smote the adverse host :
Oft from the loudly sounding bow
Ormur's unerring arrows flew,
Deadly, whene'er his wrath pursued
The bold sea-rover's trusty crew.” — p. 56.

The copious poetical literature of Denmark, extending from the ballads, which belong to the thirteenth century, to the highly finished productions of Oehlenschläger, the great Danish poet of the present day, has afforded an abundant harvest to the translators, from whom Mr. Longfellow has gathered rich and attractive material. The names cited are less familiar to common readers than those of the eminent German poets, and this portion of the volume consequently has an air of freshness, which enhances the intrinsic merit of the borrowed poems. The old Danish ballads, which embody many of the popular traditions of the North, have been translated by Jamieson with great fidelity into Lowland Scotch; the affinity between the two languages being so great, that versions can be made from one into the other with much facility. Indeed, the most ancient form of the Scotch, into which the older ballads have been turned, is about as difficult to the ordinary English reader as the original Danish. Among the other poets of Denmark, of whom specimens are given, besides those who are our contemporaries, are Tullin, Evald, Storm, Thaarup, Heiberg, and Baggesen. Of these, Evald is one of the most remarkable, having been pronounced on good authority to be "one of the most perfect lyric poets the world has ever seen." He passed most of his life in obscurity, dying in 1781, at the age of thirty-eight, and the fame which should have cheered his manhood has since been heaped upon his tomb. Longfellow's spirited version of his "King Christian," which has become the national song of his countrymen, may enable the reader to judge of the justness of the comparison that has been instituted between him and Campbell.

"King Christian stood by the lofty mast
 In mist and smoke;
 His sword was hammering so fast,
 Through Gothic helm and brain it passed;
 Then sank each hostile hulk and mast
 In mist and smoke.
 'Fly!' shouted they, 'fly, he who can!
 Who braves of Denmark's Christian
 The stroke?'

"Nils Juel gave heed to the tempest's roar;
 Now is the hour!
 He hoisted his blood-red flag once more,

And smote upon the foe full sore,
 And shouted loud, through the tempest's roar,
 'Now is the hour !'
 'Fly !' shouted they, 'for shelter fly !
 Of Denmark's Juel who can defy
 The power ?'

"North Sea ! a glimpse of Wessel rent
 Thy murky sky !
 Then champions to thine arms were sent ;
 Terror and Death glared where he went ;
 From the waves was heard a wail that rent
 Thy murky sky !
 From Denmark thunders Tordenskiol' ;
 Let each to Heaven commend his soul,
 And fly !

"Path of the Dane to fame and might !
 Dark-rolling wave !
 Receive thy friend, who, scorning flight,
 Goes to meet danger with despite,
 Proudly as thou the tempest's might,
 Dark-rolling wave !
 And, amid pleasures and alarms,
 And war and victory, be thine arms
 My grave !" — p. 84.

Extracts are given, perhaps in too great quantity, from English versions of the poems of Oehlenschläger, most of them being by Mr. Gillies, a contributor to *Blackwood's Magazine*. Among them are specimens of his three dramas, "Aladdin," "Hakon Jarl," and "Correggio," and several of his miscellaneous pieces. These appear very striking and beautiful, even under the disadvantages of a translation ; but we doubt the propriety of allotting to them so much as thirty pages in this volume, which is more than is afterwards devoted to Tegnér, and more than to Goethe and Schiller united. Professor Felton has supplied a very pleasant biographical and critical notice of Oehlenschläger.

The poets of Sweden, with the exception of Tegnér, are hardly known even by name to the English reader. The editor regrets "that the extracts which follow are so few, and from so few authors ; and in particular that I have been able to find no English translations from Nicander, one of the most distinguished of the younger Swedish poets ; nor from

Ling, one of the most voluminous." Neither do we find any specimens of Franzén, whose name, after that of Tegnér, is the most eminent on the list of the modern bards of Sweden. We find one of his love elegies translated in a number of the *Foreign Quarterly Review*; but the version is heavy and inelegant, and gives no adequate impression of his powers as a poet. Leopold, the leader of what is called the French school among his countrymen, and who, in the ardor of literary controversy, has been praised and blamed by them with equal extravagance, appears in this collection as the author of an ode, "On the Desire of Deathless Fame," which evinces considerable vigor of thought and expression. We quote a small portion of it.

- "And thou, the insect of an hour,
 O'er Time to triumph wouldst pretend;
 With nerves of grass wouldst brave the power
 Beneath which pyramids must bend!
 A slave, by every thing controlled,
 Thou canst not for an instant mould
 Thine actions' course, thy destiny;
 In want of all, of all the sport,
 Thou, against all who need'st support,
 Boatest o'er Death the mastery!
 Recall'st, as they would prove thy right
 To honors but to few assigned,
 Our Wasa sovereign's annals bright,
 The triumphs of a Newton's mind.
 Whilst round the globe thy glances rove
 On works and deeds that amply prove
 Man's strength of intellect, they fall:
 Their mysteries Time and Space unfold,
 New worlds are added to the old,
 Beauty and light adorning all.
- "Strange creature! go, fulfil thy fate,
 Govern the earth, subdue the waves,
 Measure the stars' paths, regulate
 Time's clock, seek gold in Chile's graves,
 Raise towns that lava-buried sleep,
 Harvest the rocks, build on the deep,
 Force Nature, journey in the sky,
 Surpass in height each monument,
 On mountains mountains pile, — content,
 Beneath their mass then putrefy!

" Yes, fruits there are that we enjoy,
 Produce of by-gone centuries' toil ;
 The gifts remain, though Time destroy
 The givers, long ago Death's spoil :
 And whilst deluded crowds believe
 Their guerdon they shall straight receive
 In Admiration's empty cries,
 Their whitening and forgotten bones
 Repose, unconscious as the stones
 Where burns the atoning sacrifice." — p. 145.

A view of the popular poetry of Sweden was given in the forty-second volume of this Journal, from which Mr. Longfellow has taken versions of five of the most ancient ballads. Translations of six others are borrowed from one of our English contemporaries, which, though modernized considerably in their English garb, still preserve some striking features of the remote period to which they belong. By the study of these authentic relics of the olden times, Tegnér seems to have formed his taste and fashioned his style ; from the Eddas or Sagas of the North, the true sources of information respecting the Scandinavian mythology, he has derived his materials. The antiquarian, the critic, and the philologist may track his steps in these curious researches ; but the mere lover of poetry will be content with the honey and flowers that he has gathered in those old forests, and will prize them the more highly from the additions and embellishments which they have received in passing through his hands. We need not dwell here upon the merits of Tegnér, as the biographical notice of him, and the very full analysis of his great poem, " The Legend of Frithiof," here given as an introduction to the translated extracts from his works, were first published in our pages eight years ago. Mr. Longfellow has inserted his own very beautiful versions of two cantos of Frithiof, and of " The Children of the Lord's Supper." By way of foil, probably, to the merits of these, he has quoted five other cantos from the English translation of Strong.

We have no room to expatiate upon the copious theme of German poetry, the translations from which into English, says the editor of this volume, " are so numerous, and extended through so many centuries, that they form in themselves almost a complete history." For the sake of conven-

ience, he has divided this history chronologically into seven periods, and has arranged the selected translations into corresponding divisions. The first period extends from the earliest times to the beginning of the twelfth century. The metrical remains of these times are of no worth except as literary curiosities, and the three translated fragments which are here given are quite enough to satisfy common readers. The second period, comprising the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, is one of the most fertile and remarkable in the history of German literature, and we are very glad to see it here so fully illustrated. Besides the almost innumerable love-songs and poetic romances of the Minnesingers, this division includes the fine old epic of the "Nibelungenlied," and the collection of heroic poems known as the "Heldenbuch," or "The Book of Heroes." By the aid of very full introductory notices, and copious extracts from the translations of Taylor and Weber, the reader will gain as full an idea of this curious period as it is possible to obtain without a knowledge of the older forms of the German language. The third division, extending over the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, is less interesting than its predecessor; the Mastersingers flourished in those days, the quaint old rhyme-smiths, who made a trade of the poet's calling. The sixteenth century might properly be ranked under this head, instead of forming, as it here does, a separate period; for it was the golden age of the Mastersingers. Old Hans Sachs, the poetic cobbler of Nuremberg, who wrote comedies and merry stories by the hundreds, and songs by the thousands, was the hero of this age, and the most renowned member of that curious fraternity. Translators have devoted little attention to these three centuries, and Mr. Longfellow has made but a scanty collection wherewith to illustrate their history. One or two versions of his own, a very characteristic and faithful one of "The Battle of Murtten," by Professor Felton, and a few more borrowed from this Journal, are nearly all that deserve attention. These are enough, perhaps, considering the limits of the volume; but we are sorry to find no specimen of that merry old cobbler's poetry.

The fifth division, including the seventeenth century, is but a barren period in the annals of German poetry, the names of Ayrrer, Opitz, and a few other minor poets alone occupy-

ing the page which they hardly illumine. The long religious war interrupted the pursuits of literature, and foreign influence debased the language and corrupted the tastes of the people. The only illustrations, now before us, of the poetic spirit of this age are two of Mr. Longfellow's own versions from Simon Dach, and a few grotesque verses by that eccentric preacher, Abraham a Sancta Clara. But the sixth period, extending from 1700 to 1770, is far more promising, and affords an abundant harvest of specimens. Here, says the editor, "we at length begin to emerge from the Black Forest of German literature, 'whence issuing, we again behold the stars.'" Of the many illustrious names belonging to this epoch, those best known to the English reader are Gessner, Klopstock, and Lessing. The second of these, though his reputation was once world-wide, is now, if we may credit his countryman, Menzel, rather respected for his patriotism and devotional spirit, than admired for his enthusiasm and genius. Weary of the flippancy and frivolities of the French school among his countrymen, he went to the literature of England for his models, and formed his taste by the study of Milton and Young. Yet he was not a mere imitator of the English; "On the contrary," says Menzel, "his merit in regard to German poetry is as peculiar as it is great." But our readers will remember the sarcasm of Coleridge, who, when told that he was the German Milton, muttered between his teeth, "A very *German* Milton, indeed!" Versions of four or five of his shorter poems in this volume give a pleasing, but not an impressive, idea of his abilities. The remaining translations here given from the bards of this period do not contain much that is worthy of notice.

The only remaining division, extending from the year 1770 to the present day, is the boast of German letters; for very early in this period many bright stars rose in quick succession above the literary horizon, and passed the meridian in a magnificent cluster. The debt which the preceding age had incurred to England was repaid with interest, for much of the English poetry of our own day bears decisive tokens of the study of German models. The effects of this study are sometimes visible in direct imitation, as in many of the poems of Coleridge and Shelley; but more frequently in the prevailing sentiment, and the general coloring imparted to the

thought. Much, indeed, of the mere talent of versifying, which exists among us, is directly expended upon translations from the German. In this volume, nearly a hundred pages, closely printed in double columns, are occupied with versions from the poets of this period alone ; and the quantity might with ease have been increased tenfold. Trained in such exercises, it is not surprising that the more original efforts subsequently made by these translators should still bear a deep impress derived from their German studies.

In this way, as well as from the commanding influence of Wordsworth, would we explain some of the strange mutations which English poetry has undergone since the opening of the present century. It has ceased to be narrative, epic, vigorous, clear, or equable ; it has become philosophic, elaborate, mystical, meditative, and tender. Much of it has lost the dew of the morning, the sparkle and freshness of the early part of the day. Like a landscape seen by moonlight, it abounds with indistinct outlines and shadowy forms, with figures fantastically blended together, and colors faintly seen and melting into each other in the distance. It embraces a wider range of subjects, but goes farther to search for them, and treats them, when found, with minute particularity or convulsive effort. It is impatient of rule, studious of novelty, confused in its combinations, and often harsh and rugged in its utterance ; but its lawlessness and its ruggedness are systematic and intentional, and its novelties are diligently sought for, and then patiently distributed into curious groups, just as the man of science arranges minerals in a cabinet. True, the practical element in the English character, and the utilitarian taste of the times, still offer some opposition to these foreign influences, or at least direct the choice of topics in the treatment of which these influences are conspicuous. Often, the work is not so much poetry, as it is rhymed oratory or versified philosophy, — science in metre, and sentiment and philanthropy drilled to “ move harmonious numbers.” Our age is learned, ingenious, and imitative ; and our poetry consequently lacks spontaneity, simplicity, and raciness. It is made ancillary to many purposes, — a sort of maid of all work, instead of being mistress of the house. It lectures upon science, preaches about various religious systems, and declaims against the corn laws. But on whatever task engaged, in sentiment, tone, and imagery,

in choice of metre, arrangement of topics, and the inwrought coloring of style, it still shows that it has recently been a wanderer in many lands, but especially among the remains of the Middle Ages in Germany. It often wears a garb of foreign and fantastic cut, and its coat is one of many colors.

But we are forgetting that our present theme is not English, but German poetry, and in excuse for the digression have only to plead the fact, that the contents of this volume certainly indicate an intimate relationship between the two. We have no time to track the editor over the vast field of German song, which lies between our own times and the middle of the last century; nor is it necessary. To those who are acquainted with the language, the theme appears somewhat hackneyed; to those not so fortunate, the tasteful introductory notices here given will supply the needed information in a form as succinct as is consistent with the object in view. For persons of the latter class, this portion of the volume will be one of the most attractive of all.

"Here," says the editor, "are the dwellings of Goethe, and Schiller, and Lessing; there the farms of Voss, and Herder, and Jean Paul; and yonder the grave-yard, with Matthisson making an elegy, and other sentimental poets leaning with their elbows on the tomb-stones. And then we have the old and melancholy tale, — the struggle against poverty, the suffering, sorrowful life, the early, mournful death, — still another confirmation of the fact, that men of genius too often resemble the fabled son of Ocean and Earth, who by day was wafted through the air to distribute corn over the world, but at night was laid on burning coals to render him immortal.

"One important portion of German poetry still remains to be noticed, — the great mass of Popular Songs, of uncertain date, and by unknown authors. The ancient German ballads are certainly inferior, as a whole, to the English, Danish, Swedish, and Spanish; but the German popular songs, blooming like wild-flowers over the broad field of literature from the fifteenth century to the present time, surpass in beauty, variety, and quantity those of any other country. Among their thousand sweet and mingled odors criticism often finds itself at fault, as the hunter's hounds on Mount Hymettus were thrown off their scent by the fragrance of its infinite wild-flowers. They exhibit the more humble forms of human life, as seen in streets, workshops, garrisons, mines, fields, and cottages; and give expression to the feelings of hope, joy, longing, and despair, from thousands of hearts which have no other records than these." — p. 187.

It is a point of some interest to remark, that a large portion of the translations here given, as specimens of the German poets of this period, are by American hands. As a sample of the criticisms which are embodied in the introductory notices, we will quote a part of Professor Longfellow's remarks on the writings of Heinrich Heine.

"The style of Heine is remarkable for vigor, wit, and brilliancy; but is wanting in taste and refinement. To the recklessness of Byron he adds the sentimentality of Sterne. The 'Reisebilder' is a kind of 'Don Juan' in prose, with passages from the 'Sentimental Journey.' He is always in extremes, either of praise or censure; setting at naught the decencies of life, and treating the most sacred things with frivolity. Throughout his writings are seen traces of a morbid, ill-regulated mind; of deep feeling, disappointment, and suffering. His sympathies seem to have died within him, like Ugolino's children in the tower of Famine. With all his various powers, he wants the one great power,—the power of truth. He wants, too, that ennobling principle of all human endeavours, the aspiration 'after an ideal standard, that is higher than himself.'

"In the highest degree reprehensible, too, is the fierce, implacable hatred with which Heine pursues his foes. No man should write of another as he permits himself to write at times. In speaking of Schlegel as he does in his 'German Literature,' he is utterly without apology. And yet to such remorseless invectives, to such witty sarcasms, he is indebted in a great degree for his popularity. It was not till after it had bitten the heel of Hercules, that the Crab was placed among the constellations.

"The minor poems of Heine, like most of his prose-writings, are but a portrait of himself. The same melancholy tone, the same endless sigh, pervades them. Though they possess a high lyric merit, they are for the most part fragmentary;—expressions of some momentary state of feeling,—sudden ejaculations of pain or pleasure, of restlessness, impatience, regret, longing, love. They profess to be songs, and as songs must they be judged. Then these imperfect expressions of feeling,—these mere suggestions of thought,—this 'luminous mist,' that half reveals, half hides the sense,—this selection of topics from scenes of every-day life,—and, in fine, this prevailing tone of sadness, will not seem affected, misplaced, or exaggerated. At the same time it must be confessed, that, in these songs, the lofty aim is wanting; we listen in vain for the spirit-stirring note,—for the word of power,—for those ancestral melodies, which amid the uproar of the world, breathe into our ears for evermore the voices of consolation, encouragement, and warning."—p. 350.

The following very graceful translation, by a writer in the *Edinburgh Review*, gives a good idea of Heine's minor poems.

"THE TEAR.

"The latest light of evening
Upon the waters shone,
And still we sat in the lonely hut,
In silence and alone.

"The sea-fog grew, the screaming mew
Rose on the water's swell,
And silently in her gentle eye
Gathered the tears and fell.

"I saw them stand on the lily hand,
Upon my knee I sank,
And, kneeling there, from her fingers fair
The precious dew I drank.

"And sense and power, since that sad hour,
In longing waste away ;
Ah me ! I fear, in each witching tear
Some subtile poison lay." — p. 350.

We have room but for one more specimen of German poetry, and it shall be this very striking version from Count Stolberg by Mr. W. W. Story.

"THE STREAM OF THE ROCK.

"Unperishing youth !
Thou leapest from forth
The cleft of the rock.
No mortal eye saw
The mighty one's cradle ;
No ear ever heard
The lofty one's lisp in the murmuring spring.

"How beautiful art thou,
In silvery locks !
How terrible art thou,
When the cliffs are resounding in thunder around !
Thee feareth the fir-tree :
Thou crushest the fir-tree,
From its root to its crown.
The cliffs flee before thee :
The cliffs thou engraspest,
And hurlest them, scornful, like pebbles adown.

“ The sun weaves around thee
The beams of its splendor ;
It painteth with hues of the heavenly iris
The uprolling clouds of the silvery spray.

“ Why speedest thou downward
Toward the green sea ?
Is it not well by the nearer heaven ?
Not well by the sounding cliff ?
Not well by the o’erhanging forest of oaks ?
O, hasten not so
Toward the green sea !
Youth, O, now thou art strong, like a god,—
Free, like a god !

“ Beneath thee is smiling the peacefullest stillness,
The tremulous swell of the slumberous sea,
Now silvered o’er by the swimming moonshine,
Now golden and red in the light of the west !

“ Youth, O, what is this silken quiet,
What is the smile of the friendly moonlight,
The purple and gold of the evening sun,
To him whom the feeling of bondage oppresses ?
Now streamest thou wild,
As thy heart may prompt !
But below, oft ruleth the fickle tempest,
Oft the stillness of death, in the subject sea !

“ O, hasten not so
Toward the green sea !
Youth, O, now thou art strong, like a god,—
Free, like a god ! ” — pp. 298, 299.

We have no very poetical associations connected with Holland and the Low Dutch language. The words call to mind a flat, uninteresting country, and a people much addicted to traffic, gin, and tobacco. But they have had poets, those web-footed Dutchmen, and have them still, in goodly numbers, — poets who have sung of themes as lofty, and in strains, we are bound to believe, as musical, as if they had inhabited a mountainous region, and had been nurtured by all imaginative and stirring influences. Dr. Bowering, a remarkable linguist and most successful rhythmical translator, assures us that it is so, and has given evidence of his assertion in a respectable volume, which bears the happily selected and

euphonious title of "Batavian Anthology." From this book, and from an article or two in the *Westminster and Foreign Quarterly Reviews*, which very probably came from the same hand that wrote the "Anthology," Mr. Longfellow has culled all the specimens, which are here given, of Low Dutch poetry. Certainly, the fraternity of bards in Holland is under great obligations to Dr. Bowring for introducing them to the great people who speak the English tongue. If he had not fished them up, most of their works, so far as the English reader is concerned, might as well have been drowned in the *Zuyder Zee*. The specimens collected do not impress us very favorably. Those from the poets of our own times are the best; though of one of these, Kinker, the frank admission is made by his admiring critic, that "his verses are frequently unintelligible, though they leave the impression, that, if we could but understand them, they would be very fine." The reason assigned for this obscurity is quite a sufficient one, as it appears that Kinker was deeply bitten by the rage for Kantian metaphysics.

More accomplished, and better known out of his own country, as it seems that Mr. Southey has somewhere spoken of him, is Bilderdijk, who wrote and quarrelled incessantly during nearly the whole of a long life, which ended in 1831. Yet most of our readers will be disposed to echo the question with which Southey begins to speak of him, "And who is Bilderdijk?" The author of "*Thalaba*" coolly replies, that it would not be necessary to ask, if it had not been for the confusion of languages which took place at the building of Babel. The published works of Bilderdijk fill over one hundred octavos, "and there are more behind in manuscript." A Dutch critic remarks of him, that he "excels in every species of poetry, tragedy alone excepted; in this he has been able to equal neither the ancients, nor the French triumvirate, nor Shakspeare, nor Schiller, nor Vondel"; — a qualification which we can admit to be well founded, though we are not familiar with the Low Dutch tragedies of Vondel.

Mr. Longfellow has divided his view of French poetry, very nearly as he has done the German, into six periods, and arranged the translated specimens into corresponding divisions. They would fall more naturally, perhaps, under three heads, — the first embracing the earlier poems, and coming

down to the middle of the seventeenth century, the second extending to the end of the reign of Louis the Fourteenth, and the third comprising what has been written since the earlier part of the eighteenth century. This arrangement would have shown, at least, in what unequal measure the treasures of French poetry have been made available for the English reader. That which belongs to the second of our periods, the most brilliant of the three, the courtly and magnificent age of the Great Monarch, seems either not to have attracted the notice of English translators, or to have defied their skill. French poetry of the classical school, indeed, is not well suited to our Anglo-Saxon tastes, and can with difficulty be rendered into our language without the loss of its most striking characteristics. Polished to the last degree of nicety, and often dependent for its principal charm on the most subtle idioms and the most delicate shades of expression, most of it is as untranslatable into English verse as the Odes of Horace. The editor, as we have said, has given us little from this period except a scene or two from some rather flat adaptations of the works of its great dramatists to the English stage.

But from the earliest of our three periods, Mr. Taylor, Miss Costello, and Mr. Longfellow have furnished an abundance of versions, most of them being very tasteful and rhythmical. The songs of the Jongleurs, the Trouvères, and the Troubadours come under this head. The vocation of all three differed not much from that of the Minnesingers of Germany, for the burden of their songs "was love, still love." The Jongleurs were simply wandering minstrels, who sang what they wrote, while the Trouvères composed, but did not sing; these two classes belonged to the North of France, while the strains of the Troubadours, softer and more voluptuous, came from the sweet South. As a specimen of their lays, and of the graceful versions of Miss Costello, we will extract two of the specimens, leaving it for our readers to ascertain whether Tom Moore has stolen from the Troubadours, or whether the fair translator has borrowed from the Irish bard the softness and melody of her versification.

" Who has not looked upon her brow
 Has never dreamed of perfect bliss :
 But once to see her is to know
 What beauty, what perfection, is.

" Her charms are of the growth of heaven,
 She decks the night with hues of day :
 Blest are the eyes to which 't is given
 On her to gaze the soul away ! " — p. 429.

" No, never since the fatal time
 When the world fell for woman's crime,
 Has Heaven in tender mercy sent —
 All preordaining, all foreseeing —
 A breath of purity that lent
 Existence to so fair a being !
 Whatever earth can boast of rare,
 Of precious, and of good, —
 Gaze on her form, 't is mingled there,
 With added grace endued.

" Why, why is she so much above
 All others whom I might behold, —
 Whom I, unblamed, might dare to love,
 To whom my sorrows might be told ?
 O, when I see her, passing fair,
 I feel how vain is all my care :
 I feel she all transcends my praise,
 I feel she must condemn my lays :
 I feel, alas ! no claim have I
 To gain that bright divinity !
 Were she less lovely, less divine,
 Less passion and despair were mine." — pp. 430, 431.

The French poets of the present century appear to considerable advantage in this volume ; and yet, they hardly have their due. But very few of their effusions have been skilfully married to English verse, though they are more translatable than the works of their immediate predecessors, the classical school. There is a very good introductory notice of Chateaubriand ; but the two translated scraps of his verses give no idea of his poetic talent. Five or six of Beranger's inimitable lyrics have been capitally rendered in some of the English magazines, and Mr. Longfellow has done well in transferring the versions to his volume. A few translations from Victor Hugo, executed with great spirit and elegance, have been borrowed from our contemporary, the Democratic Review. The specimens given of the poetry of Madame Tastu and of Auguste Barbier are enough to make one wish for more from the same source.

From the well trodden field of Italian poetry the editor's gleanings have been considerable, and they form one of the most attractive portions of the volume. The chronological arrangement is into four periods, — the first including the poets of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, the second extending over the fifteenth, the third over the sixteenth, century, while the fourth reaches from the year 1600 to the present day. Of these, the first and third are evidently the most interesting, the former comprising the immortal names of the *trecentisti*, of Dante, Petrarch, and Boccaccio, and the latter shining with the hardly less splendid fame of Ariosto, Michel Angelo, and Tasso. English translators have been as fond of trying their skill upon the great Italian poets, as they have been fearful of the French; and Mr. Longfellow has consequently had more scope than usual for exercising his taste in making selections. He has generally shown nice discernment and true appreciation of the relative merits of different translators. He has passed over, for the most part, the watery transfusions of Hoole, and has gleaned from the ephemeral pages of the minor periodicals many scraps of translation, executed with great spirit, fidelity, and grace, which might otherwise have floated down to oblivion. We are not so well satisfied to find no specimen of Cary's translation of Dante, which, though it is unrhymed, and is in ordinary blank verse, instead of the metre of the original, is still executed with so much vigor, precision, and beauty, as well to deserve the reputation it has long enjoyed, of being a classic in this department of English literature. The gem, as it seems to us, of the specimens here brought together of versions from Dante is the following exquisite translation from the twenty-third book of the "Paradise," by Mr. F. C. Gray. We quote it the more readily, as in Mr. Longfellow's volume it appears, we believe, for the first time in print, and as it fully exemplifies our ideal of the manner in which such work should be performed, — not slavishly literal, but preserving all the spirit and general meaning of the original, which it fully rivals in grace and elegance. It is a perfect little poem, made so thoroughly English, as, for the eye unacquainted with the Italian, to retain no trace of its foreign origin. Mark the manner in which the interlocking rhyme and measure sustain the prolonged sense, and bear out the elaborate and beautiful comparisons in their full meaning and harmony.

" BEATRICE.

" Like as the bird, who on her nest all night
 Had rested, darkling, with her tender brood,
 'Mid the loved foliage, longing now for light,
 To gaze on their dear looks and bring them food, —
 Sweet task, whose pleasures all its toil repay, —
 Anticipates the dawn, and, through the wood
 Ascending, perches on the topmost spray,
 There, all impatience, watching to descry
 The first faint glimmer of approaching day :
 Thus did my lady, toward the southern sky,
 Erect and motionless, her visage turn ;
 The mute suspense that filled her wistful eye
 Made me like one who waits a friend's return,
 Lives on this hope, and will no other own.
 Soon did my eye a rising light discern ;
 High up the heavens its kindling splendors shone,
 And Beatrice exclaimed, ' See, they appear,
 The Lord's triumphal hosts ! For this alone
 These spheres have rolled and reaped their harvest here !'
 Her face seemed all on fire, and in her eye
 Danced joy unspeakable to mortal ear.
 As when full-orbed Diana smiles on high,
 While the eternal nymphs her form surround,
 And, scattering beauty through the cloudless sky,
 Float on the bosom of the blue profound :
 O'er thousands of bright flowers was seen to blaze
 One sun transcendent, from whom all around,
 As from our sun the planets, drew their rays ;
 He through these living lights poured such a tide
 Of glory, as o'erpowered my feeble gaze.
 ' O Beatrice, my sweet, my precious guide !' " — p. 524.

The introductory notice of Dante, we believe, was written by Mr. Longfellow himself, and we quote from it the following beautiful and just explanation of the general idea on which the poet's great work depends.

" We are to consider the Divine Poem as the mirror of the age in which its author lived ; or rather, perhaps, as a mirror of Italy in that age. The principal historic events and personages, the character and learning of the time, are faithfully imaged and reproduced therein. Most of the events described had just transpired ; most of the persons were just dead ; the memory of both was still warm in the minds of men. The poet did not merely imagine, as a possibility ; but felt, as a reality. He was wandering about homeless, as he composed ; almost borrowing the ink

he wrote with. They who had wronged him still lived to wrong him further. No wonder, then, that in his troubled, burning soul arose great thoughts and awful, like Farinata, from his burning sepulchre. When he approached a city's gates, he could not but be reminded that into the gates of Florence he could go no more. When he beheld the towers of feudal castles cresting the distant hills, he felt how arrogant are the strong, how much abused the weak. Every brook and river reminded him of the Arno, and the brooklets that descend from Casentino. Every voice he heard told him, by its strange accent, that he was an exile; and every home he saw said to him, in its sympathies even, 'Thou art homeless!' All these things found expression in his poem; and much of the beautiful description of landscape, and of the morning and the evening, bears the freshness of that impression which is made on the mind of a foot-traveller, who sits under the trees at noon, and leaves or enters towns when the morning or evening bells are ringing, and he has only to hear 'how many a tale their music tells.'

"Dante, in his Latin treatise '*De Monarchiâ*,' says, that man is a kind of middle term between the corruptible and the incorruptible, and, being thus twofold in his nature, is destined to a twofold end; 'namely, to happiness in this life, which consists in the practice of virtue, and is figured forth in the Terrestrial Paradise; and eternal beatitude, which consists in the fruition of the divine presence; to which we cannot arrive by any virtue of our own, unless aided by divine light; and this is the Celestial Paradise.' This idea forms the thread of the '*Commedia*.'

"Midway in life the poet finds himself lost in the gloomy forest of worldly cares, beset by Pride, Avarice, and Sensual Pleasure. Moral Philosophy, embodied in the form of Virgil, leads him forth through the hell of worldly sin and passion and suffering, through the purgatory of repentant feelings, to the quiet repose of earthly happiness. Farther than this mere philosophy cannot go. Here Divine Wisdom, or Theology, in the form of Beatrice, receives the pilgrim, and, ascending from planet to planet, brings him to the throne of God.

"Upon this slender, golden thread hangs this universe of a poem; in which things visible and invisible have their appointed place, and the spheres and populous stars revolve harmonious about their centre." — p. 514.

Tasso fares well in this volume. A well written sketch of his life, and a discriminating criticism on his poetry, are followed by extracts from very good translations of his works. The specimens of the "*Jerusalem Delivered*," with excellent taste, are taken from the version by Fairfax,

one of the oldest, but certainly the best, of the numerous translations of this immortal poem. Most of his sonnets which are quoted are in the English dress given to them by Mr. R. H. Wilde, whose two volumes of "*Conjectures and Researches*" respecting Tasso are a most honorable monument to the taste, scholarship, and critical acumen of the writer. Of the crowd of Italian poets who have flourished during the past two centuries, as full notices and specimens are given as will be desired by the ordinary reader.

It only remains for us to notice the collections made to illustrate the history of poetry in Spain and Portugal. Three periods are established in the annals of the former, — the first reaching from 1150 to 1500, the second including the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and the third coming down to the present day. The comparative barrenness of the latter division reminds one of the mournful decline in the condition and prospects of noble and romantic Spain. Ten pages suffice for notices and specimens of the Spanish poets who have flourished during the last century and a half, while more than five times that number give but an insufficient idea of the rich harvest of poetry, in that storied and picturesque land, during the two preceding centuries. This second period is adorned with the great names of Cervantes, Lope de Vega, and Calderon, of Garcilaso de la Vega, Ponce de Leon, and Ercilla, and a crowd of minor bards, almost any one of which outshines the brightest of those belonging to a later day. The high spirit for which the people were always remarkable was nurtured by their rich and chivalric life, by their widely spread renown in war, and by their marvellous and successful adventures on the ocean and in the newly discovered world. National pride and magnanimity of feeling could not but flourish under such influences as these ; the serious and religious element, always predominant in the Spanish character, colored and modified the effects produced by external circumstances, and the spirit of honor, loyalty, and faith imbued all their imaginative literature. Lyric poetry and the drama, the poetry of passionate love or equally passionate devotion, were the particular forms and modes of verse in which their fervid life and excited imaginations were most readily and frequently embodied. There was, perhaps, a tendency to exaggeration in their poetry, flowing from the strong excitement of their minds ; but this was kept down in all their works of

the highest class, through the innate gravity and dignity which were manifest in their noble bearing. True pride preserves from bombast, and concentrated passion rarely falls into mere rant. Even the mysticism, to which the rapturous devotional feeling of some of their poets was prone, was checked and overborne by the mandates of a severe taste and carefully nurtured judgment.

The editor was fortunate in being able to select versions of Spanish poetry from the works of a multitude of excellent translators. Bowring, Wiffen, Roscoe, Lord Holland, Shelley, and Bryant are among those to whom he is indebted, and he has, as it were, repaid the loan with a few of his own musical and faithful renderings into English. We have already exhausted our space for quotation, but must find room for the following morsel of exquisite versification by our own Bryant, taken from the anonymous poetry of the earliest period. We know nothing of the source whence it was drawn, but it is one of those cases in which it will appear a mere impertinence to ask whether the version be faithful to the original. The translator who has succeeded so perfectly has made the English verses in every sense his own.

“ THE SIESTA.

“Airs! that wander and murmur round,
 Bearing delight where'er ye blow, —
 Make in the elms a lulling sound,
 While my lady sleeps in the shade below.

“Lighten and lengthen her noonday rest,
 Till the heat of the noonday sun is o'er:
 Sweet be her slumbers, — though in my breast
 The pain she has waked may slumber no more!
 Breathing soft from the blue profound,
 Bearing delight where'er ye blow,
 Make in the elms a lulling sound,
 While my lady sleeps in the shade below.

“Airs! that over the bending boughs,
 And under the shadows of the leaves,
 Murmur soft, like my timid vows,
 Or the secret sighs my bosom heaves, —
 Gently sweeping the grassy ground,
 Bearing delight where'er ye blow,
 Make in the elms a lulling sound,
 While my lady sleeps in the shade below.” — p. 664.

We would willingly dwell upon the beautiful ballads, which are the most precious part of the early poetry of Spain, and which appear in this volume in very pleasing, but very paraphrastic, versions into English. But we must pass on, to speak very briefly of the specimens of Portuguese poetry. The editor has here adopted the same division into historic periods as in the case of Spain ; the materials from which he has drawn were copious, for besides many of the translators already mentioned, Strangford, Adamson, and Mrs. Hemans have made numerous and valuable contributions for a Portuguese anthology. As for the originals, one name is written so high above all the others, that the foreign reader's attention is fastened almost exclusively upon it. Neither the first nor the third period in the literary annals of Portugal seems very rich, if we look at the quality of the wares, rather than their quantity ; and the second appears engrossed, as it were, with the single fame of Camoens, the writer of the national epic, who, in his lifetime, was steeped in poverty to the lips, and died in a hospital. As usual in such cases, a splendid monument was erected to him fifteen years after his death, when his name had become honorable to his country, though his country could no longer be of service to him. The "*Lusiad*" is the heroic poem of Portugal's heroic age ; it celebrates one of those grand feats of maritime adventure, which form epochs in the history of the world. Vasco de Gama's great discovery of a passage round the Cape of Good Hope seems hardly to afford sufficient material for an epic ; but Camoens himself had followed in this distinguished captain's track, and the story of his own adventures and sufferings in the East Indies might have furnished out a poem of equal or greater length. The merit of the work is probably to be ascribed in a considerable measure to his personal adventures ; if he had seen and suffered less, he might have written less forcibly. Misery is the most effectual, as it has been the most common, stimulant of genius. The defects of the poem are nearly as conspicuous as its beauties ; overwrought description, an ill-constructed story, and incongruous machinery are great drawbacks from the pleasure given by an epic. These faults, unluckily, are not likely to be lessened in a translation, and Camoens certainly is under no great obligations to Mr. Mickle, who has done the "*Lusiad*" into English. A better idea of the poetic genius of the

Portuguese bard will be gained from some very pleasing versions of his minor poems.

We have endeavoured to give the reader some idea of the very varied and interesting contents of Mr. Longfellow's volume ; but the sketch has necessarily been an exceedingly meagre one. The book abounds with material for the gratification of a cultivated taste, and for the instruction of every mind of a generous and inquiring nature. But it does not admit of abridgment, and the nearest approach to a summary account of it would be to copy its table of contents. It suggests many themes for criticism and reflection, which we have reluctantly passed over, and now leave for the unbiased consideration of those who may be able to dwell long and studiously upon its attractive pages.

ART. IX. — *Historic Fancies*. By the HON. GEORGE SYDNEY SMYTHE, M. P. Second Edition. London : Henry Colburn. 1844. 8vo. pp. 386.

THE institutions of England seem to have reached a crisis which will require all the wisdom of her wisest statesmen to conduct to a safe and happy issue. Pressed to the earth by a national debt, the extent of which imagination itself can scarcely embrace, hemmed in by vast accumulations of property, side by side with the most sordid poverty, the working classes have reached the lowest point of suffering which human nature can bear. The prodigious emigration to the colonies, and to the United States, increasing every year, scarcely seems to diminish the terrible sum of evil which still exists at home. The destiny of England is a grand, but fearful problem. The cries for relief from millions of agonized human hearts cannot go up for ever in vain. But what measure, or what series of measures, wisely conceived and vigorously executed, are destined to work out her salvation, and raise her to a power and a prosperity even beyond her present imperial greatness, perhaps no human sagacity can as yet foresee.

Among the most curious phenomena, however, which the condition of affairs in England has exhibited to the world